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Lycurgus

New York *Daily Advertiser*, 2 April 1787

MR. CHILDS, In your Paper of the 24th instant, I observe a piece signed REASON, proposing a dissolution of the Confederation and a division of the United States into three republics.

The question is of the utmost magnitude, and though it may at first view appear impracticable, yet on investigation, it will appear to be founded on the best established principles of human polity. It is easy to see that the confederation cannot long subsist in its present form: Containing such an immense territory, extending through such a variety of climates, and over people whose manners, customs, and religion are different, and whose interests are often opposed to that of each other. The members that compose it, must perpetually differ in opinion, and little cordiality can long subsist among people who have such different views and interests to pursue.

All political writers of eminence agree, that a republic should not comprehend a large territory; experience bears testimony to the truth of this observation; Partial evils may always be remedied, but it is impossible to provide against *those*, that incessantly arise from radical imperfections.

In vain do we make general laws, and expect obedience to them, if they are not adapted to the habits and manners of the people, and calculated to the climate.

In order to obviate the above objections, I would suggest the propriety of adding a fourth republic. The first to contain the states of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode-Island and Connecticut, to which Vermont might be added. The second to contain New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. The third, Virginia, the two Carolinas, and Georgia. And the fourth to contain, the state of Franklin, Kentuckey, and the lands lying on the Ohio.

This is a division that seems to be pointed out by climate, whose effect no positive law ever can surpass.

The religion, manners, customs, exports, imports, and general interest of each, being then the same, no opposition arising from differences in these (as at present) would any longer divide their councils, unanimity would render us secure at home, and respected abroad, and promote agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.

I cannot, however, agree with *Reason*, in opinion, that each state must part with its sovereignty, on the contrary I think it essentially necessary that they should in every respect retain the same sovereignty and internal jurisdiction, they do at present, otherwise the republics would fall to pieces by internal imperfection.

These are humbly submitted as the outlines of a plan, which an abler pen may hereafter reduce into a permanent system, from which may result peace, liberty, and security to our country.

New-York, March 30, 1787.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [1] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1981), 58–59.